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Special team to investigate Kwai Chung industrial accident

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The Labour Department has set up a special team headed by a Deputy Chief Factory Inspector to investigate the fatal industrial accident occurred in Kwai Chung this (Thursday) evening.

The accident took place at around 6 pm when a metal working platform attached to a concrete pillar at an Airport Core Programme site in Wing Shun Street collapsed. Six workers died as a result.

The acting Commissioner for Labour, Mr Alfred Chan, who went to the scene, has expressed enormous concerns about the accident. He said his department would definitely take prosecution action against the offender if there were sufficient evidence.

Mr Chan later met relatives of the deceased workers at Yan Chai Hospital and advised them on matters relating to employees' compensation.

Arrangements have been made for them to approach the Labour Department's Employees' Compensation Division at Canton Road Government Offices at 10 am tomorrow (Friday).

The department will also make arrangements for the contractors concerned to meet the relatives there to discuss compensation matters.

End

Governor's statement on Kwai Chung accident

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The Governor, the Right Honourable Christopher Patten, issued the following statement today (Thursday):

"I was shocked by the news of the terrible accident on a construction site at Kwai Chung today which claimed the lives of six people. On behalf of the community, I would like to offer my condolences to the families and friends of the victims. Industrial accidents such as this are a cause of great concern. I have asked for an urgent report from the Commissioner for Labour."

End

Statement by Secretary for Works on Kwai Chung accident

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The Secretary for Works, Mr H S Kwong, expressed his deep concern about the tragic accident at an airport railway construction site that caused the death of six people today (Thursday).

Mr Kwong said: " I have discussed the matter with the Director of New Airport Projects Co-ordination Office and we would follow it up with the MTRC and Labour Department which are carrying out separate investigations into the accident.

"The Works Branch will work jointly with the Education and Manpower Branch to find out what lessons we could learn from this tragedy in order to improve worksite safety."

Mr Kwong extended his condolences to the families of the six people killed in the accident.

End

Statement by Director of NAPCO on Kwai Chung accident

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The Director of New Airport Projects Co-ordination Office, Mr Billy Lam, tonight (Thursday) offered condolences to the families of the workers who died on contract 510 Rambler Channel Bridge.

After visiting the scene, Mr Lam said this was a very serious accident in the Airport Core Programme and he was very saddened by it.

End

No cause for undue alarm over slope situation

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Parents of students of the 19 schools which have been either issued with Dangerous Hillside Order or are near substandard public slopes in the Landslip Preventive Measures Programme should not be alarmed.

Speaking to the media today (Thursday), the Director of Education, Mrs Helen C P Lai Yu, said: "There is no cause for undue alarm. Government including the Education Department has been monitoring the situation closely.

"In fact, earlier we had issued reminders to schools on the need for regular slope inspection, timely maintenance and precautionary measures. And we are doing more.

"We have distributed a layman's guide to slope maintenance and an advisory note on buried drains affecting slopes.

"We are examining existing slope safety guidelines to make them clearer and more comprehensive.

"We are reissuing a letter we recently sent to the 19 schools concerned to give them further advice on special arrangements to ensure the safety of students and staff."

"We are advising school heads to fence off the affected areas as advised by the professionals or consultants appointed for the project. Warning notices should also be posted at conspicuous positions on site to keep people away from risk."

Four of the 19 schools have completed the remedial works to the slopes. Of the remaining 15, investigation or remedial works are underway.

"Our aim is to carry out the works as quickly as possible," said Mrs Yu.

She said school heads had been advised in an Administration Circular recently that if local weather, road, slope, traffic conditions warrant the closure of a particular school and a general announcement had not been made by the Director of Education, a school head may close the school at his discretion.

"We are reminding school heads to prepare a contingency plan in consultation with authorised persons or consultants and to inform parents of arrangements", she added.

End

List of schools served with Dangerous Hillside Order

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In response to media enquiries, a government spokesman said today (Thursday) that the following 14 schools on private land have been served with the Dangerous Hillside Order issued under Section 27A of the Building Ordinance:

- * St Louis School
- * St Paul's Co-educational College
- * TWGH's Lee Ching Dea Memorial College
- * Wah Yan College, Hong Kong
- * The True Light Middle School of Hong Kong
- * Wah Yan College, Kowloon
- * Diocesan Boys' School
- * True Light Girls' College
- * St Clare's Girls' School
- * The Building Contractors' Association School
- * SKH Stanley Village Primary School
- * Po Leung Kuk Perching Tsang Primary School
- * St Basil's School
- * Kiangsu and Chekiang Primary School

Five other schools are being affected by three substandard public slopes being upgraded under the Landslip Preventive Measures Programme. They are:

- * Cognito College
- * Man Kiu Association Primary School
- * Hong Kong Taoist Association School
- * FDBWA Yan Kow School
- * SKH St John's Primary School

End

Chief Secretary hails HK's friends in US

* * * * *

The Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, on Wednesday (New York time) praised Hong Kong's many friends in the United States.

"Everywhere I go in the United States, I am delighted to find a strong interest in Hong Kong," Mrs Chan said during a luncheon address to about 500 business executives, academics, and members of the media as she continued her programme in New York City as part of the Hong Kong-USA promotion.

"Hong Kong is fortunate to have such good friends overseas," the Chief Secretary said in her speech given at the business luncheon organised by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council.

"People around the world, in particular in North America, do see Hong Kong's success as something in which they do have an interest. The American interest in Hong Kong is very extensive," she said.

Mrs Chan told the many business executives attending the day-long conference to use Hong Kong as the gateway to do business with the rest of Asia.

The Chief Secretary's media activities included top-level meetings with the editorial board of the influential New York Times and a breakfast meeting with the Business Week magazine, as well as a meeting with senior editors of Time magazine.

Following her activities at the promotion, Mrs Chan officiated at the ceremony to mark the Hong Kong Wonder's Never Cease exhibition at Manhattan's South Street Seaport.

In the evening, Mrs Chan travelled to Dallas, Texas, for the next leg of the three-city promotion. The promotion concludes in Los Angeles.

End

Civil service crucial to Hong Kong's success

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The Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan, said the clean, fair and business-friendly government culture together with the loyalty of the civil service to Hong Kong is the foundation of the territory's success and the real basis for optimism about its future.

Speaking at the business luncheon in New York on Wednesday (New York time), Mrs Chan said she and her civil service colleagues were 100 per cent determined that this government culture would not change.

She said the civil service was crucial to Hong Kong's success now and in the future.

"It is the main reason why we have built one of the world's richest societies in a place with no natural resources.

"We do not interfere with business. You can compete in Hong Kong on equal terms with everyone else, whether you are American, Chinese, British or Greek.

"Our regulations are simply and fairly applied. We do not take bribes. And we do not tilt the table for political or for any other ulterior reasons," she said.

She said none of the work Hong Kong had done since 1984, the signing of the Sino-British Joint Declaration, to secure its future would matter much if that government culture changed.

Responding to recent press reports about civil service loyalty, the Chief Secretary said civil servants were working for Hong Kong and would remain loyal to Hong Kong.

"Chinese leaders fully accept this and have confirmed that they expect Hong Kong civil servants to remain dedicated to serving the people of Hong Kong," she said.

"At the same time we consider ourselves to be Chinese. I am quite typical of my civil service colleagues in being proud to be Chinese and in wanting to contribute to China's emergence as a vibrant, modern nation.

"I am equally typical in being fiercely loyal to Hong Kong and to the Hong Kong culture, which has provided me and my family with freedom and opportunity."

Freedom and opportunity were not things which, once attained, can be quietly extinguished, she said.

"Those of us who hope to remain in public service in Hong Kong - and Vice Premier Qian Qi-chen said recently that he hoped all civil servants would do so - will remain true to the values and the culture of the place that has given us so much," said Mrs Chan.

The Chief Secretary said Hong Kong had been practising autonomy for generations.

"Hong Kong people are running Hong Kong and will be running Hong Kong after 1997," she said.

"We value the place we have built under the British umbrella and, as Chinese, we are determined that it should continue to thrive under the Chinese umbrella."

Mrs Chan said Hong Kong people would face up to the problems of the transition by remaining true to themselves.

"With goodwill, with trust, and with recognition of the enormous interests at stake, I believe that Hong Kong will indeed continue to thrive," said the Chief Secretary.

End

HK's debt market a rising star of Asia Pacific Region: FS

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The Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, said the Government would strive to work closely with the private sector in developing a world-class market infrastructure for Hong Kong's debt market.

Speaking at the Annual Dinner of Financial Executives Institute (HK) Ltd this (Thursday) evening, Mr Tsang said the Government's philosophy that private sector initiatives should remain the guiding force for the development of the debt market would continue.

"This is the best way to ensure an attractive investment environment for Hong Kong well in the 21st century," he said.

Mr Tsang noted that Hong Kong's thriving debt market had built up within a relatively short period of time a critical mass for further development.

Describing Hong Kong's debt market as a rising star of the Asia Pacific capital markets, Mr Tsang said the market had seen very rapid growth and would continue to do so.

"The expansion has been phenomenal. From a very low base of about \$27 billion at the end of 1989, the size of the Hong Kong dollar debt market increased to \$214 billion at the end of March 1996, of which \$154 billion were private sector debt issues," he said.

He said the growth of Hong Kong's debt market had so far thrived largely on private sector initiatives, although the Government did take a very active role in facilitating such initiatives, including the launch of the Exchange Fund Bills and Notes Programmes in 1990.

"We have also encouraged multilateral agencies with good credit ratings to tap the local debt market. We grant them profits tax exemption on the Hong Kong dollar papers they issue.

"To encourage the issue of quality long-term debt securities in Hong Kong, I announced in my last Budget the introduction of a concessionary tax rate equal to 50 per cent of the standard profits tax rate to the interest income and trading profits derived from qualified debt instruments issued in Hong Kong," said Mr Tsang.

He said two further new government initiatives - the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) and the proposed Mortgage Corporation - would immensely benefit Hong Kong's debt market despite their different primary objects.

The MPF system would cover more than two million people in the workforce and was expected to generate a significant increase to the retirement reserves, he said.

"This large pool of reserves will filter into demand for debt and other financial instruments. The estimated annual contributions under the System will amount to about HK\$30 -40 billion," he added.

He said assuming that the retirement scheme investments adopt a balanced portfolio between equities and bonds, the introduction of the MPF System would boost the development of both the equity and bond markets.

Mr Tsang said the proposed Mortgage Corporation would stimulate market development by providing high quality debt paper for investments and widening the range of financial products being offered, including unsecured paper and mortgaged-backed securities (MBS).

He expected that the Corporation would help promote the standardisation of MBS products, encourage the issue and trading of MBS in Hong Kong, and boost the development of Hong Kong's secondary mortgage market.

"With the MPF System and the Mortgage Corporation in the pipeline, in the domestic scene, Hong Kong's debt market is geared up to further expansion in the coming years," Mr Tsang said.

Mr Tsang said in the regional setting, Hong Kong is also well placed to act as the centre for debt financing services for the region's huge infrastructure work programmes.

The Asian Development Bank and the World Bank have both estimated that the region's infrastructural investment needs will be around US\$1.5 trillion to US\$2.5 trillion in the years up to 2000.

China alone is estimated to account for one-third of this amount.

"With the clustering of financial institutions, excellent market infrastructure, advanced telecommunications, sound legal system, accounting and logistical support, level playing field and high integrity of our regulatory system, Hong Kong can certainly play an important role in arranging such debt issues.

"In particular, we will certainly be able to carve a niche in arranging for China's debt issues," Mr Tsang said.

End

Red light camera system in LRT area

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The Transport Department has installed red light camera systems to crack down on red light jumping at signalised road junctions along the Light Rail Transit Area.

The system includes a camera unit, loop detectors, sensors and a control unit.

The camera is mounted on a pole overlooking the signalised road junction and the signal sensors are linked with the traffic light signal aspect.

Cameras are being installed at 13 signalised road junctions in Tuen Mun, Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai where red light jumping is a problem, according to the engineer of Road Safety and Standards Division of Transport Department, Mr Wong Kam-tong.

The first two locations to install the system are at the road junction of Tsing Lun Road and Fu Tei Roundabout and the junction of Tsun Wen Road, Tai Fong Street and Tsing Chung Koon Road. The systems in other locations can fully be implemented in September.

Mr Wong said: "The red light camera system will reduce red light violations and enhance road safety in Light Rail Transit Area.

"A vehicle which violates the red light signal will be detected and photographs will be taken. The photographs will show the offending vehicle and the red signal light aspect.

"The licence plate number of the offending vehicle will be clearly shown in the photographs. As a result, the photographs will provide a clear evidence for the police to prosecute the red light runners."

Mr Wong reminds the public that red light jumping is a serious offence which carries a penalty of three demerit points.

The maximum penalty for first conviction is a fine of \$5,000 and three months' imprisonment. The maximum fine is \$10,000 and six months' imprisonment for the second or subsequent convictions.

End

Patents Bill to protect inventions

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The Patents Bill, which establishes an independent patent system in Hong Kong for the protection of inventions in line with international standards, will be gazetted tomorrow (Friday).

A spokesman for the Trade and Industry Branch said: "The Patents Bill provides for the grant of independent patents in Hong Kong based on the registration of a patent granted by the United Kingdom Patent Office, the European Patent Office designating the United Kingdom, or the Chinese Patent Office.

"It also provides for the grant of short-term patents. This will give a new type of protection in Hong Kong for inventions with a short-term commercial life.

"It sets out the procedures for obtaining and maintaining patents and short-term patents in Hong Kong, the rights given to the owners, and provisions for enforcement.

"A patent protects technical innovation. A patent system encourages new technology by granting the inventor a patent for his invention which gives him the right to exploit his invention for a set term. An inventor in exchange is required to make his invention public.

"The disclosure of this new technology provides a major source of technical information to inventors, businessmen and other users.

"A draft Patents Bill has been issued to parties concerned in the industrial, professional and academic fields during a consultation exercise from February to March 1996. We have as far as possible incorporated the comments received in this Bill.

"At present, there is no original grant of patents in Hong Kong. We register in Hong Kong United Kingdom patents and European patents designating the United Kingdom.

"A local patent law needs to be enacted before July 1, 1997 because the existing patent registration law is dependent on United Kingdom patent law.

"The Patents Bill largely follows the recommendations made by the Patents Steering Committee in its report issued for consultation in May 1993. The basis for the Bill and the new independent patent system were agreed in the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group's 34th Plenary Meeting in November 1995.

"The Bill will be introduced into the Legislative Council on June 26 in order to ensure that the necessary patents legislative and administrative system can be put into place before July 1, 1997."

End

New title for Recreation and Culture Branch

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The Recreation and Culture Branch will shortly operate under a new title to reflect more accurately its policy responsibilities.

With effect from June 8, the English title of the Branch will be changed to Broadcasting, Culture and Sport Branch (BCSB). At the same time, the Secretary for Recreation and Culture will be retitled as Secretary for Broadcasting, Culture and Sport (SBCS).

The Chinese titles of the Branch and the Secretary, which already refer to broadcasting, will remain unchanged.

A spokesman for the Branch said the word "sport" was a clearer and more accurate description of the Branch's responsibilities in this area than the current "recreation".

End

ICCPR supplementary report made public

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The United Kingdom government's supplementary report on Hong Kong under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) is made public today (Thursday).

The report was requested by the United Nations Human Rights Committee (HRC) when it examined the fourth report on Hong Kong last October.

"The report covers issues of concern to the HRC as well as new developments since last October. It provides an up to the minute assessment of the protection of human rights in Hong Kong," said a government spokesman.

"Topics of concern to the HRC covered in the report include the investigation of complaints against the Police, the treatment of Vietnamese migrants, the electoral system, anti-discrimination legislation and the submission of reports to the UN after 1997.

"The discussion of new developments deals with such issues as the Bill of Rights Ordinance, the provisional legislature and right of abode in Hong Kong."

HRC will examine the report during its Autumn session from October 21 to November 8. A Hong Kong team will attend as part of the UK delegation.

Free copies of the report are now available at the Marketing Office of the Information Services Department, 17th floor, Siu On Centre, 176-192 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai.

End

Views on special education report sought

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School sponsors, serving school principals and teachers, practitioners in special education sector and related fields, and members of the public are invited to give views and suggestions on a newly released report on the review of local special education.

The Report of the Sub-committee on Special Education is prepared by the Board of Education Sub-committee on Special Education. It recommends a package of comprehensive measures to improve special education in the territory.

English copies of the report and its executive summary (English and Chinese versions) are available for collection at the Education Department's Reception Counter on tenth floor, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai.

Views and suggestions on the report should reach Mrs Fanny Lam, the Board Secretary, at Room 1123, Education Department Headquarters, Wu Chung House, on or before July 8 (Monday).

To gauge public views on the report, two public consultation sessions will be conducted on June 12 (Wednesday) at Grantham Campus of the Hong Kong Institute of Education at 42 Gascoigne Road, Kowloon, and June 13 (Thursday) at Hong Kong Teachers' Centre at 4 Pak Fuk Road, North Point, respectively. Both sessions will be held between 6 pm and 8 pm.

The report offers 70 improvement recommendations, covering 10 areas in special education:

- * Administration and co-ordination of special education
- * Educational concerns in special education
- * Provisions in the Code of Aid for special schools
- * The curriculum and related matters
- * Teacher education
- * Education for children with learning difficulties
- * Education for the gifted
- * Education for the maladjusted
- * Practical schools and skills opportunity schools
- * Other measures for further improvement

Enquiries about the consultation sessions may be directed to Senior Executive Officer, Mrs Mabel Mak, on 2892 5793.

End

External investments in non-manufacturing undertakings

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The Census and Statistics Department announced today (Thursday) that the Survey of External Investments in Non-manufacturing Undertakings for 1995 had started.

The survey aims to collect up-to-date information on external investments in non-manufacturing sectors. The data are useful to both the Government and the private sector in formulating policies and making decisions.

The Commissioner for Census and Statistics, Mr Frederick Ho, appealed to the managements of all sampled business undertakings to fulfil their legal and social responsibilities by returning promptly the completed questionnaires and co-operating with census officers of the department in the course of the survey.

He stressed that information relating to individual business undertakings would be treated in strict confidence under the Census and Statistics Ordinance. Only aggregated information that does not reveal details of individual undertakings will be released.

Mr Ho also pointed out that audited accounts were not essential for the supply of data required in the survey. The Census and Statistics Department accepts figures based on preliminary accounts or estimates which are correct to the best of the respondents' knowledge at the time of submission of the questionnaire, if audited accounts are not yet available.

About 3,000 business undertakings in the non-manufacturing sectors will be enumerated in the present round of the survey. Information to be sought in the survey includes type of ownership, employment, types of business, capital and expenditures, business plans and the opinion on Hong Kong as a location for investment.

The survey is conducted under the Census and Statistics (Annual Survey of External Investments in Non-manufacturing Undertakings) (Amendment) Order 1995, which was gazetted on April 28, 1995, under the Census and Statistics Ordinance.

Survey questionnaires have been mailed to the sampled business undertakings. These business undertakings are required by law to complete and return the questionnaires to the Census and Statistics Department by June 30, 1996.

If required, census officers of the department will visit individual business undertakings and assist them in completing the questionnaires. These officers will carry a Government Identity Card and a certificate for conducting the survey whilst on duty, which are available for inspection.

Any enquiries regarding the survey may be directed to the General Economic Surveys Section of the Census and Statistics Department on 2805 6647 or 2805 6436.

End

Pamphlet on Chinese medicine published

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A new pamphlet promoting the safe and proper use of Chinese medicine is now available free of charge to members of the public.

Published by the Preparatory Committee on Chinese Medicine (PCCM), the pamphlet aimed at enhancing public's awareness on the safe use of Chinese medicine and their knowledge on the characteristics of some common toxic Chinese herbs.

Introducing the pamphlet today (Thursday), Chairman of the Working Group on Chinese Medicine of PCCM, Mr Tam Ling-kwan noted that the publication contained two articles featuring the correct methods in choosing and preparing Chinese medicine and a brief description of Chinese herbs medication and food medication.

"In addition, it lists out the names of 31 potent/toxic Chinese herbs, their usage and some useful advice on their preparation. It will help people identify those commonly found herbs which contain certain toxicity," he said.

"We hope that through this public education exercise, people will have a better understanding of and be more careful in the use of these toxic Chinese herbs."

Mr Tam said in compiling the list, PCCM had made reference to a similar list prepared by the State Council of People's Republic of China and recent local herbal poisoning cases.

Copies of the pamphlet are now available at Department of Health's regional offices and health education centres, District Offices, public hospitals and Chinese medicinal organisations.

End

CD ROM to publicise Sex Discrimination Ordinance

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The Home Affairs Branch (HAB) has produced a CD ROM to enhance public understanding of the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (SDO) which aims to promote equal opportunities for women and men.

It is another initiative following the recent publication of the comic book to publicise SDO, which has been well received by members of the public, particularly the students, women's groups and the banking sector.

Describing the newly-released CD ROM as a comprehensive guide to the ordinance, an HAB spokesperson said its contents were divided into six main parts.

The CD ROM starts with a brief introduction of SDO. It then proceeds to define sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

Examples are portrayed with comic illustrations. Relevant provisions are listed in each example to provide viewers with a quick reference.

The third part contains information about the newly established Equal Opportunities Commission which has been tasked to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities between men and women under the ordinance.

The fourth part carries the full English and Chinese version of the Sex Discrimination Ordinance while the fifth part is a quiz on the ordinance to test viewers' understanding of various provisions.

The last part is the drama version of the new comic book on SDO dubbed in Cantonese.

The CD ROMs on SDO will be distributed to women and youth groups, public libraries, secondary schools, tertiary educational institutions and community organisations.

They are now available at the Marketing Office of the Information Services Department, 17th floor, Siu On Centre, 176-192 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai. Interested parties may also telephone 2511 8165 to obtain free copie.

End

Crown rents due on June 24

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Demand notes have been issued for Crown rents for the half year ending on June 24 in respect of an amount exceeding \$100 per year, a spokesman for the Treasury said today (Thursday).

Payment can be made using the Payment by Phone Service (PPS) or by post addressed to the Director of Accounting Services, P O Box 8000, GPO, Hong Kong, or in person at any of the following offices:

- * The Treasury Headquarters Collection and Payment Office, Immigration Tower, first floor, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong;
- * The Central Sub-Treasury, Central Government Offices (West Wing), 11 Ice House Street, Hong Kong;
- * The North Point Sub-Treasury, Max Share Centre, first floor, 373 King's Road, North Point, Hong Kong;

- * The Sai Wan Ho Sub-Treasury, Eastern Law Courts Building, ground floor, 29 Tai On Street, Sai Wan Ho, Hong Kong;
- * The Yau Ma Tei Sub-Treasury, Kowloon Government Offices, fourth floor, 405 Nathan Road (Market Street entrance), Kowloon;
- * The Kowloon City Sub-Treasury, Man Sang Commercial Building, first floor, 348-352 Prince Edward Road (corner of Prince Edward Road and Junction Road), Kowloon;
- * The District Office at Sai Kung, Sha Tin, Tai Po, North, Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, Tsuen Wan or Kwai Tsing.

Crown rent payers who have not received their demand notes should bring along those for any previous period to any of the Treasury collection offices.

Duplicate demand notes will be issued to them. Payment can then be made at any of these offices.

If the payers cannot produce demand notes for any previous period, they should enquire at the Crown Rent Unit of the Treasury at Immigration Tower, 30th floor, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

Non-receipt of the demand notes does not alter the requirement that the Crown rents must be paid by June 24, the spokesman said.

Crown rent payers who have submitted a valid direct debit authorisation should note that if the wording "Payment To Be Made By Autopay" is shown on the demand notes, payment will be made by direct debit to their bank accounts on June 24.

They should then ensure that their bank accounts contain the necessary funds on that date.

If the above wording is not shown, they should pay according to the instructions as set out in the demand notes.

To save queuing time, the spokesman urged Crown rent payers to use the Payment by Phone Service, or pay by post using cheques or cashier orders, or by early personal attendance at any of the collection offices.

However, the most convenient payment method is autopay under which Crown rent payers' bank accounts will only be debited on Crown rent due dates, he said.

Applications for autopay are obtainable from Treasury collection offices, district offices and all major banks in Hong Kong or by telephoning 2829 4999.

For additional information regarding the Payment by Phone Service, please call 900 00 222 329.

The spokesman advised Crown rent payers to note the following points:

- * To avoid legal action for re-entry of a property, the owner for the time being of that property is obliged to pay Crown rent including any arrears as demanded;
- * The Crown rent payable under a lease of a property which has been renewed under the Crown Leases Ordinance and re-developed, will be three per cent of the rateable value of that property as assessed following the redevelopment.

Pending completion of the assessment and other related procedures, Crown rent demands will be based upon the pre-redevelopment rateable value.

In due course, Crown rent for the difference between the rent based upon pre- and post-redevelopment rateable values will be demanded and the owner for the time being is obliged to pay the rent as demanded. If he does not, legal action for re-entry of the property may be instituted.

- * Demand or acceptance of Crown rent in respect of any property with unauthorised structures does not imply in any way that the unauthorised structures are authorised or otherwise recognised by the Government.

The Government expressly reserves the right to take whatever action in respect of such unauthorised structures it considers appropriate, including demolition or removal of the structures or re-entry of the property.

He advised property buyers to instruct their solicitors to ensure that at the time of purchase the Crown rent was paid up to date.

If a property is subject to the Crown Leases Ordinance and has been re-developed but the rental paid up to the date of the purchase is not based upon an assessment of the rateable value of the property since its redevelopment, appropriate steps should be taken by the purchaser or his solicitors to protect the purchaser, the spokesman said.

Enquiries on outstanding accounts in respect of Crown rent may be addressed to the Director of Accounting Services. The fee is \$60 for each enquiry per property.

End

Grading of beach water quality

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The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (Thursday) announced the grading of Hong Kong's beaches, based on their bacteriological water quality, for the 1996 swimming season.

The purpose of the grading system is to inform swimmers and the general public about the state of bacteriological pollution at various beaches.

The grading, which is based on the most recent E coli data obtained by EPD in its routine monitoring programme, will be announced biweekly during the bathing season to coincide with the frequency at which beach waters are usually sampled.

As with last year, it also includes an estimate of the risk of contracting some minor skin or gastrointestinal complaints as a result of swimming at a beach which has some degree of pollution.

The estimate is based on a very large body of statistical information gathered in Hong Kong in recent bathing seasons.

The grading of some beaches may vary during the summer. This represents a natural fluctuation in the bacteriological quality of bathing waters in most cases, as rain and tides bring more or less pollution to the beaches.

However, the grades give a good general picture of the water quality at bathing beaches at the time of reporting and form the best available forecast for the immediate future.

Beaches with highly developed hinterlands are likely to be more polluted than the grades suggest during and after heavy rain.

"Bathers should avoid such beaches for two or three days after a storm, longer if the weather remains overcast or less if there is strong sunshine", acting Principal Environmental Protection Officer, Mr Edmond Ho, said.

The system for grading beach water quality is as follows:

Grade "1" indicates that the water quality is good. The E coli count is no more than 24 per 100 millilitres at each beach so graded, and the expected risk of minor illness to swimmers is undetectable.

Grade "2" indicates that the water quality is fair. The E coli count is no more than 180 per 100 millilitres at each beach so graded, and the expected health risk is no more than 10 cases of minor illness per 1,000 swimmers.

Grade "3" indicates that the water quality is poor. The E coli count is no more than 610 per 100 millilitres at each beach so graded, and the expected health risk is no more than 15 cases of minor illness per 1,000 swimmers.

Grade "4" indicates that the water quality is very poor. The E coli count is more than 610 per 100 millilitres at each beach so graded, and the expected health risk is more than 15 cases of minor illness per 1,000 swimmers.

The decision whether or not to close a beach to swimmers is based on a judgement of what degree of pollution is acceptable.

Normally, the closure of a beach would only be considered by the Urban or Regional Council if a grade "4" occurred repeatedly, so that the average health risk over the bathing season exceeded 15 cases per 1,000 swimmers.

At present five gazetted beaches, namely Anglers', Approach, Castle Peak, Rocky Bay and Ting Kau, are closed to swimmers, while Old Cafeteria is re-opened.

The decision to open or close the beaches has been made by the Regional and Urban Councils on the basis of beach water quality monitoring data for 1995. The public are advised not to swim at the closed beaches. They are identified by an "X" in the following list.

The grades of the bacteriological water quality of various beaches in Hong Kong today are listed below:

<u>Beach</u>	<u>Previous Grading</u> (as at 23.5.96)	<u>Present Grading</u> (as at 6.6.96)
<u>Hong Kong South</u>		
Big Wave Bay (S)	3	3
Chung Hom Kok (S)	1	1
Deep Water Bay (S)	1	1
Hairpin (S)	2	2
Middle Bay (S)	1	1
Repulse Bay (S)	1	1
Shek O (S)	3	2
South Bay (S)	1	1
St. Stephen's (S)	3	2
Turtle Cove (S)	1	1
Stanley Main (S)	2	2
Rocky Bay	X	X

Tuen Mun District

Golden Beach	3	3
Old Cafeteria	3	3
New Cafeteria	3	3
Castle Peak	X	X
Kadoorie (S)	3	3
Butterfly (S)	3	3

Sai Kung District

Clear Water Bay 1st Beach(S)	2	2
Clear Water Bay 2nd Beach(S)	2	2
Hap Mun Bay (S)	1	1
Kiu Tsui (S)	1	1
Silverstrand (S)	3	3
Trio (Hebe Haven) (S)	2	2

Islands District

Cheung Sha Upper	1	1
Cheung Sha Lower	2	3
Discovery Bay*	2	2
Hung Shing Yeh	1	1
Kwun Yam Wan	1	2
Tong Fuk	1	1
Lo So Shing	1	1
Pui O	2	1
Silvermine Bay	2	2
Tung Wan, Cheung Chau (S)	2	2

Tsuen Wan District

Anglers'	X	X
Approach	X	X
Casam (S)	4	4
Gemini	4	4
Hoi Mei Wan	3	3
Lido (S)	3	3
Ting Kau	X	X
Tung Wan, Ma Wan	2	2

Note: "X" The beach has been closed for swimming purposes.

* Non-gazetted beach.

(S) Beaches where shark prevention nets have been installed.

The following beaches have changed grading on this occasion: Shek O and St. Stephen's from "3" to "2"; Pui O from "2" to "1"; Cheung Sha Lower from "2" to "3" and Kwun Yam Wan from "1" to "2".

The changes are within the normal range of fluctuation of the bacteriological water quality of these beaches.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

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	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	2,323	0930	-362
Closing balance in the account	1,679	1000	-362
Change attributable to :		1100	-364
Money market activity	-364	1200	-364
LAF today	-280	1500	-364
		1600	-364

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 124.4 *+0.0* 6.6.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	5.01	2 years	2805	6.30	100.10	6.34
1 month	5.05	3 years	3904	6.30	99.07	6.77
3 months	5.15	5 years	5103	6.75	97.96	7.39
6 months	5.29	7 years	7305	7.60	99.63	7.82
12 months	5.67	5 years	M502	7.30	99.37	7.61

Total turnover of EF bills and notes - \$8,421 million

Closed June 6, 1996

End